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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

terday. Charlotte Walker was quite acceptable in the leading rôle and Jobyna Howland had a splendid opportunity to display her virtuosity as a demi-vierge of the roaring forties. As a vampire she left little to the imagination.

*The Squab Farm*, by the Huttons, fairly reeks and is quite the most tasteless piece

of vulgarity which has appeared this year on our stage. It is not that it is pornographic; it is because it displays the mental attitude of a rather nasty little boy who has just commenced to learn a few things of life and is desirous of airing his knowledge. A mere transcript of tender-loin expressions is hardly interesting.

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

*And After!*

There is no reason to assume that political and social conditions will be revolutionised after the war; there is every reason to assume that these conditions will be changed only in the more or less dilatory course of evolution. The conditions which have been the outgrowth of centuries of custom and ingrained habit are too deeply rooted to be shaken from their foundations even by such a cataclysmic upheaval as the war. There must be some sound reason for the existence of a custom or institution which has been continued for an appreciable period; although some customs, like tipping the hat brigands in hotels, appear to be supererogatory.

The truth is that most men are either incapable of thinking simply or even of thinking at all, and for that reason most of what one hears might as well be left unsaid as it is merely phonographic repetition of utter nonsense. Thus we hear frequently from persons, who have never thought consecutively on any one subject—except the comparatively trivial one of money-making—for five minutes at a time, of the tremendous changes which are going to occur in the political and social make-up of the world, especially in England and on the Continent. Judging from past experiences the truth is the contrary,

and there has been a reactionary tendency after great wars.

Take for example that unimportant but significant custom which you may see exemplified any day in a Devonshire lane—the salute of the man on foot to the man on horseback. It is very evident that this custom has suited Englishmen, as no one thinks for a moment that in these days of trades-unions and Board schools, and when Wells, Bennett, Shaw and Galsworthy, the socialistic quartette, are the popular writers, that the man on foot feels that he is an inferior in the medieval sense, or that the other construes this picturesque act of courtesy as homage to a superior. Very well then, why should the temporary fraternising of the classes during the war affect post-war conditions in respect to such acts or the spirit involved?

The theory that the votes of returned soldiers will affect conditions materially is likewise untenable. There is no reason to assume that soldiers will vote as a unit or nearly as a unit on any subject outside of their own personal interests, than there is to assume that women will vote as a unit. Indeed, where women's votes have been counted separately it has been found that the result did not differ by two per cent from the vote of the men. If there is any difference in the psychology of the soldier as a result of the war it will be found in a

tendency to hardening and simplicity; the avoidance of mushy sentimentality and indirect thought. They will have learned to respect competency for they will have seen how competent officers may have saved their lives, whereas incompetency on the part of leaders has been responsible for the loss of their comrades' lives. If anything, this will be a blow at democracy, for democracy distrusts competent men and competent men disdain popular opinion.

The only analogy which has been supplied in recent years to the war—and after—was supplied in a small way by the earthquake and fire which nearly destroyed San Francisco in 1906. After the citizens had recovered from the stunning effects of the blow many commenced at first to prophesy and urge the laying out of the city on a new plan. Nothing of the sort occurred. People were too busy making a start with their business and household affairs to bother much about a model city, and it was found, curiously enough, that the old locations were, after all, about the most convenient. There was a reason for their existence.

There has been, of course, a marked disposition to change for a number of years past as a result of a quickening of thought and a tendency everywhere to substitute new lamps for old. By clearing away the débris the war may anticipate the results of evolution by a number of years. This tendency has been shown in art, letters, manners and dress, as well as in business, politics and social life. We are becoming simpler with that simplicity which is the result only of the most intense sophistication. There is a fresh breeze blowing through the world which is dissipating some of the fogs that have hung over the minds of men and obscured the light.

Labor does not distrust Capital to the

same extent as it did twenty years ago, and Capital is willing to admit that workingmen may be human beings. The social taboos are weakening and Society no longer casts stones at divorced persons. As women are becoming more independent economically they are exercising the right to a certain degree of unconventionality in their life and at the same time they retain the respect of the community, or at least of an increasing number who are similarly situated. Whatever the effect of the war may be otherwise the unshackling tendency will continue and men will be governed less and less in their actions by nurse-taught tradition or by the opinions of a dead and gone majority. But this revolt is not the result of the war, it was in full swing long before the fatal bomb was exploded at Sarajevo.

### *The New Narcosis*

When the mechanistic explanation of the Universe was practically abandoned by science towards the close of the nineteenth century, there was a recrudescence of metaphysics, and the pragmatists, Bergsonians, neo-Platonists and the like had their innings. On the religious side there came on the wave of reaction a rag-tag and bobtail collection of pseudoscientific, religious and therapeutic systems most of which were based on some scheme of subjective illusion. As a panacea for the ills of life, mankind was told that evil did not exist except in the mind, therefore if you did not think there was evil or pain, presto, there was none. Incidentally pragmatism is based on similar, if somewhat more elusive, ideas.

Doubtless there are many very worthy people who hold these beliefs and, in ordinary circumstances, we would have no quarrel with them if they did not try to impose their opinions too forcibly on the rest of the community. In a state of war,

however, neither laws run nor do ordinary considerations govern, and therefore the attempt at proselytising our soldiers to some of these "thought" doctrines should bring out a sharp reproof from those in authority.

We are informed that pamphlets are being distributed to the soldiers which, in the name of religion, exhort them to trust in some "thought" or other to save them miraculously, as it were, from the hazards of battle; and, still worse, tend to undermine their moral fibre and impugn their country's cause. The impression is conveyed that the war is nothing more than a quarrel between two sets of madmen and is as irrational and purposeless as a riot in a lunatic asylum. It is declared that only "love" should prevail, and this love, as painted, is a kind of mawkish sentimentality incapable of distinction between right and wrong and without any sense of moral obligation. The concepts of Right and Wrong, of Justice and likewise just punishment are tabooed as unworthy of these egotistical upstarts who would substitute a sickly and anemic doctrine for the living wall of flesh which alone stands between us and the sadistic aggressions of the paranoiacs of Potsdam.

From the beginning of time men have sought some surcease of woe, a short cut to happiness, an anodyne for the aches and pains of life. Some have sought drugs—alcohol, morphia and its derivatives—as an easy way out. The theory that pain does not exist simply because it is not thought to exist is simply another narcosis, a mental dope, which robs the addict of virility and the determination to face bravely the slings and arrows of misfortune. The he-man gathers his adversaries' spears to his breast and dies, if need be, facing the foe; the man who pretends that evil does not exist, except in so far as he admits its existence, turns his face to

the wall and continues his dream while the foundations of the earth are rocking. So does the dope-friend.

This is no time for subjective illusion. The foe is before us, a concrete fact. The only way to prevent him from getting us is to get him first. The bayonet, the rifle, the gun and the bomb are the only weapons with which to meet and beat the Hun, and the dependence on "holding a thought" can only rob the soldier of his determination to "hold" the enemy at all costs, including the supreme sacrifice. Therefore any propaganda teaching reliance on mental science undermines the fighting spirit and is pro-German propaganda, whether projected by the enemy or by a religious body, and whether it is projected sincerely or through the instigation of the enemy. In either case the sternest measures of repression should be adopted by the authorities.

### *The Reckoning with Rome*

In this generation we hardly realise the bitter strife which raged around the Church of Rome in other years and in other countries. Indeed, the Church has become a kind of pet among the nations, and no doubt reaction and contrast have contributed to this feeling of kindly tolerance or genuine affection with which she has been regarded recently even by those who are not of her communion. Her wisdom on matters affecting individual liberty, such as drink, dancing, and Sunday amusements; her genuine tolerance in affairs not related to her sacerdotal authority; her consolations, dignity, and patience; the picturesqueness of her great historic past; the very tact and bonhomie of many of her priests—all of these stand out in refreshing contrast to the crudeness, vulgarity, impudence and narrow-mindedness of many of the modern sects who would hustle you to heaven in

the blare of a brass band or the din of screeching hallelujahs, in the meantime denying your right to select your own diet or the recreations of your leisure hours.

There is no doubt that the Church owes her present position very largely to her tact in abstaining from interference in political affairs either locally or internationally, but it is not so very long ago that men would foam at the mouth at the mere mention of her name and "The Scarlet Woman" and "The Beast of Babylon" were among the mildest terms of opprobrium used as synonyms for the Papal Church.

The attitude of the Vatican and the clergy in connection with the war is producing a revulsion of feeling towards Rome, and when the world settles down to a normal condition and the great reckoning with the Hun is finished, more attention will be given to the position and actions of the Church during the great struggle. The Vatican was silent when Belgium was invaded and supine when its property was destroyed and its priests murdered. Its first utterance during the war was heard in the Papal peace message of a year ago—a message which the world has come to believe was dictated from Vienna. The Roman Catholic priests in Quebec have enjoined their flocks to abstain from enlisting, and recently the clergy of Ireland have read pledges from their pulpits by which the parishioners were exhorted to refuse conscription. To be sure, Archbishop Logue, the Papal Primate of Ireland, has denied that the Church thus had interfered directly with the politics of Great Britain and had incited her subjects to rebellion, nevertheless the action must have met with her tacit approval or it would not have been

taken so universally, and we do not hear that she has disavowed the conspiracy to aid the Germanic cause.

Of great significance at this moment are the reasons which the original "blood-and-ironmonger," Bismarck, gave for his adoption of *Kulturkampf*, and which for frank and frigid cussedness hardly are equalled in the entire literature of statecraft. Among other things he said: "The laurels of Sadowa and Sedan do not satisfy my ambitions, I have a more glorious mission, that of making myself master of Catholicism. The enemy of Germany is Pontifical Rome. That is the danger that menaces the relations of Germany and France. If France identifies herself with Rome she constitutes herself by that fact alone the sworn enemy of Germany."

This naïve statement gives the show away, as it were, and is especially recommended to the attention of all devout Catholics. It leads one to wonder just how far the Prussian poison-gas has penetrated the Holy See, and if this sinister policy is the reason why the Papal Band is playing the German tune.

The reasons for the Church's espousal of the Hun are not easy to discover. Whether it is because Prussian propaganda has reached the Papal ears *via* Austria; whether it is on account of hostility to France for the expulsion of the clergy, the secularisation of the schools and the confiscation of church property; or whether the Pope is simply backing the wrong horse—none can say—but, in view of the evidence, it would appear as if the Church soon will be brought face to face with the greatest crisis of her history since the Reformation. Already in England the cry of "No Popery" has been begun. Where will it end?